

# STEELHEAD NEWS

A Publication of the Lake Superior Steelhead Association

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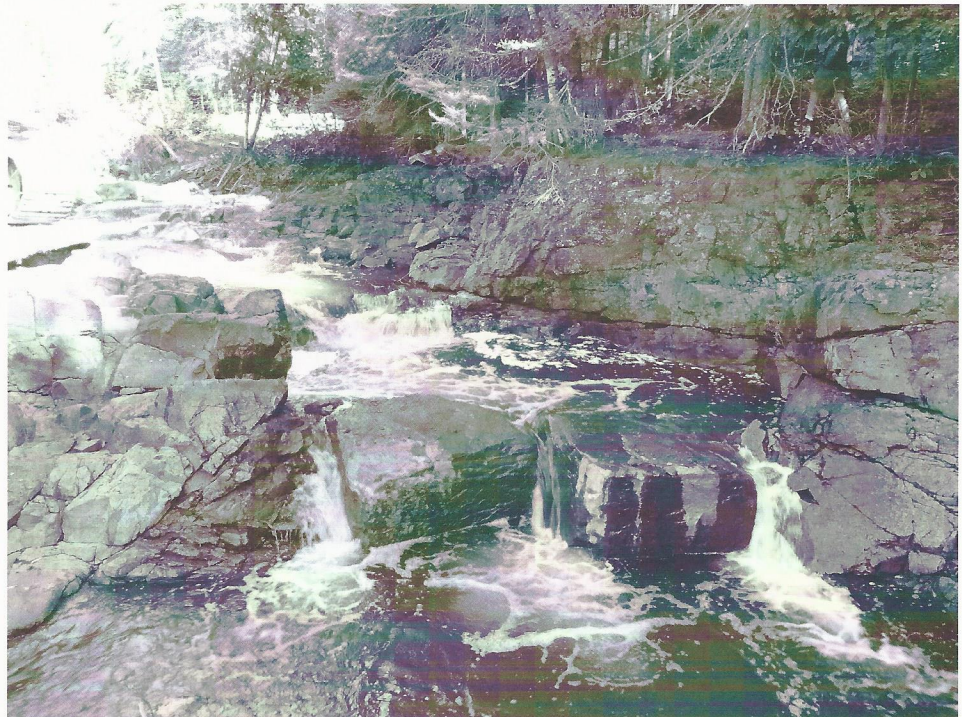
## Knife River 2nd Falls = FIXED!

by Scott Kuiti

The 2nd Falls at the Knife River has been fixed. Two large stones have been placed and pinned to restore the jumping pool that had once existed. Once again, Anadromous Brook, Brown and Steelhead Trout will be able to pass the falls during low flow conditions and proceed upstream to spawn.

From the 1970's until 2005, a concrete weir was in place to create a jumping pool at the 2nd Falls. Most likely time and weather took its toll on the weir and it disappeared. This was first brought to the LSSA's attention at the July 2005 board meeting.

The fix did not come easy, but persistence by the LSSA over time has paid off. In May of 2013, the LSSA petitioned the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) to amend the accomplishment plan to include 2nd Falls work in the LSSA's Legacy Grant for Knife River Habitat



Rehabilitation. DNR Commissioner, Tom Landwehr, and DNR Director of Fish and Wildlife, Ed Boggess, supported the amendment with letters. The LSSA met with the LSOHC in early June and the amendment was passed unanimously.

*(Continued on page 4)*

*2nd Falls of the Knife River after rocks have been placed. Photo courtesy of Scott Kuiti.*

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## 2nd Falls = Fixed

(Continued from page 1)

This project was a partnership with DNR Fisheries. The DNR supplied the Design and Permit and the LSSA would carry out the project with Legacy Grant funding. Later in June the LSSA met with the DNR to discuss the plan. Luther Aadland, MN DNR River Ecologist, created the design. Two rocks measuring 3.5' x 6.5' x 5' would be placed in the river at or about the location of the former concrete weir.

At the end of July a permit for work was issued to Don Schreiner, DNR Lake Superior Area Supervisor, by Cliff Bentley, DNR Area Hydrologist. The LSSA was granted land access to the 2nd Falls from St. Louis County's Land and Minerals Department by Jason Meyer, Area Manager and worked directly with Tim Rutka. With permits in hand, the LSSA put out a Request For Proposal (RFP) to bid the project. RJS Construction Group from Superior, Wisconsin was awarded the bid.

The next challenge was to find rocks that would match the design, two at 3.5' x 6.5' x 5'. After scouring the Duluth area quarries and finding nothing, we headed north. Cliffs Natural Resources Northshore Mine in Babbitt had rock. Kevin Bovee and Scott Kuiti took a road trip to the mine and pick out rocks that met the design requirements. Six rocks were tapped that met the size requirements. The rock at Northshore Mine is heavy with an estimated density rating of 2.7 tons per cubic yard. The rocks weighed about 12 tons a piece. Cliffs Natural Resources donated the rock for the project along with the labor and equipment to load the rocks onto transport trucks.

The project was on the fast track at this point. Low water conditions on the Knife created an ideal window to complete the project. The rocks were



*Unloading rocks at the Knife project site.*

delivered to the access point of the job site on August 29th. On Tuesday September 3rd, Dustin Waldo, Project Manager from RJS Construction notified the LSSA that they had an opening in their schedule to begin work that afternoon. Quickly, notifications were sent out to the DNR's Luther Aadland, project designer, others in the DNR and LSSA members working on the grant. The teams quickly assembled. While some work began on Tuesday, the majority of the project took place on Wednesday, September 4th.

With Luther Aadland on site, measuring and directing the RJS operators, the rock placement was executed perfectly. First hand witnesses to the project also included: Dusty Waldo, RJS Construction; Don Schreiner DNR Lake Superior Area Fisheries Supervisor; Josh Blankenheim, DNR Lake Superior Anadromous Specialist; and LSSA members Craig Wilson, Gary Siverson, Kevin Bovee, Sam Alvar, Curt Wistrom and Scott Kuiti.

After the rocks were placed, rock fill

was added to close the gaps and fill the pool. The jumping pool was now re-created. With the river running at 14 CFS (cubic feet per second), a 5-foot deep pool was created directly below the 2nd Falls and a 4-foot deep pool exists below the newly placed rocks. At 50 CFS, anadromous fish should be able to swim the falls.

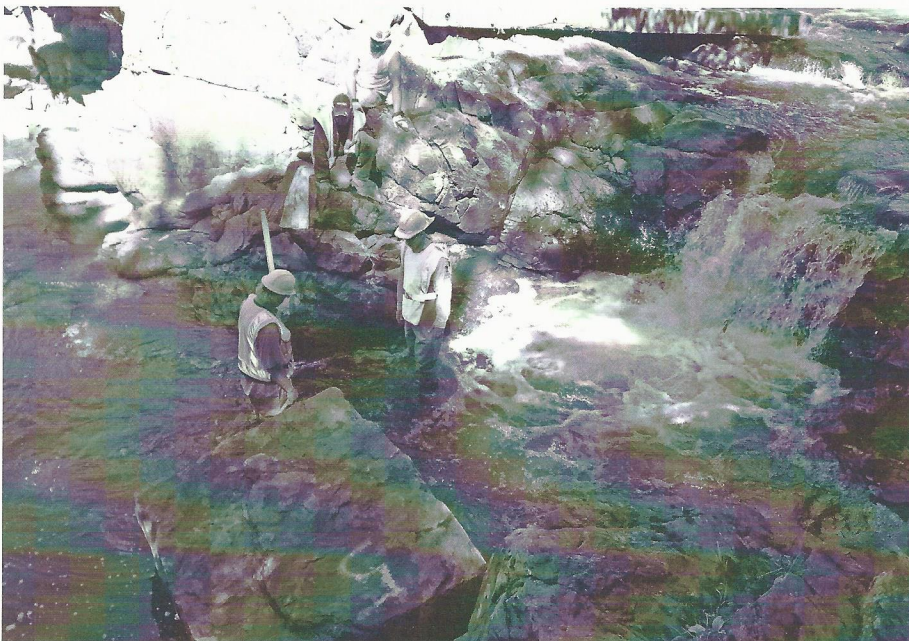
September 4, 2013 was a great day for anadromous brook, brown and steelhead trout as their access to the upstream reaches of the Knife was restored.

The LSSA greatly appreciates the support and partnerships that helped make this project happen. Thank you Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council-Legacy Grant; DNR Commissioner Landwehr, DNR Fish and Wildlife Director Boggess, DNR staff Aadland, Schreiner, Bentley and Blankenheim; Cliffs Natural Resources Northshore Mine; RJS Construction Group; St. Louis County Land and Minerals staff Meyer and Rutka; and the LSSA's persistence to accomplish this project.

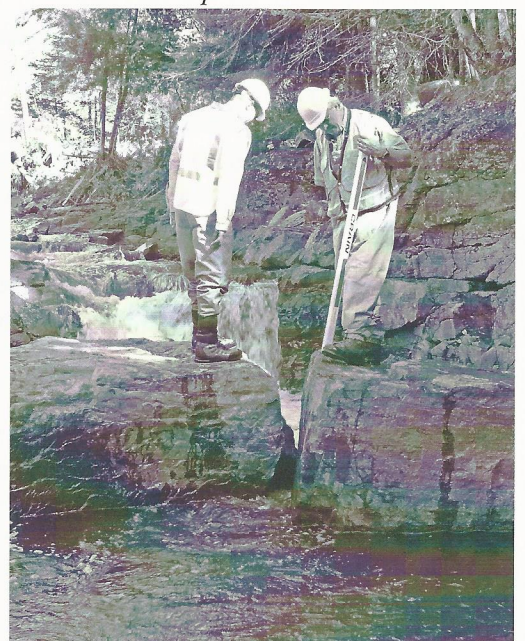




*RJS slings rock into place in the bed of the Knife River*



*Luther Aadland and Josh Blankenheim measure the depth*





# LSSA Tree Planting Project

By Kevin J. Bovee

As many of you know, the Lake Superior Steelhead Association successfully applied for and received a grant through the Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. This grant was to assess and work on habitat in the Main West Branch tributary of the Knife River. The LSSA believes that this is a very important tributary in the watershed. In the grant application, we stated that we would have a 'volunteer' effort as a component of the grant. Right away we thought of planting trees because the club had done this several times in previous years in different locations throughout the watershed.

Because of the late start to the work, the initial site visit did not occur until late fall in 2012. During this visit, we looked at many of the road crossings and walked a stretch of the Main West Branch from just above the North Shore Trail where it crosses the creek downstream to near the first private property. The walk was through several beaver meadows but it was the very first meadow that jumped out at us as a great site for a volunteer tree-planting project. The access was easy for the volunteers and if we could get permission from the MN DNR to use ATV's to haul in trees and equipment, the site would be perfect.

The first contact was to the MN DNR staff up in Two Harbors asking for permission to use ATVs on the trail to get in the necessary site prep equipment which would be too heavy and cumbersome to carry in by hand and to haul in trees. Joe Russell, DNR Parks and Trails Area Supervisor, was very supportive of our project and promised the access that we needed for the work. Trees were then the next priority and the LSSA once again went to the Hammer Nursery where we had obtained locally grown, potted trees for past projects. These potted trees seemed to survive much better than did the bare root stock that has been used in other sites throughout the watershed. We were ready to proceed.

The LSSA picked June 1, 2013 for the







planting date. Much prep work went into the site prior to the planting-wire cage construction, cutting the reed canary grass back at each individual tree site and finally hauling in all the trees to be planted. The day finally arrived. We had had sign-up sheets for the project at our annual Spring Banquet and several notices in the newsletter, Steelhead News. But until you see the folks walking in you never know how things will turn out, schedules always have a way of changing.

Bob Campbell, Bruce Gockowski, Scott Fifield, Scott Nelson, Lorri and Don Mitchell, Sam Alvar, John Whaley, Dennis Johnson, Tom Alvar, Scott Massie, Jon Aspie, Scott Kuiti, Joe Gardepy, Kevin Bovee, Gary Siverson, Dan Gaylord and Paul Sandstrom all converged on the North Shore Trail at 8 am on the first and walked into the site. The day was cool and cloudy-perfect for the work at hand. We had previously hauled in 145 trees-a mix of coniferous and deciduous species. Research indicated that planting tree species in clumps was the preferred method these days. A large planting of a single specie was no longer the best management practice for watersheds.

All the site preparation paid off in spades. By the time we were finished just prior to noon on that Saturday, all the trees were in the ground, well watered and equipment hauled back out to the landing area. Scott Nelson, a long time member of the LSSA and owner of Dunn Bros. Coffee on London Road in Duluth, provided a delicious bag lunch for all the volunteers complete with a huge cookie for dessert. If we forgot anyone or have misspelled a name, we apologize and will make the necessary correction.

The LSSA would like to thank all the volunteers mentioned above, Dave Hammer and Will Hartman for supplying the great trees, Joe Russell of the MN DNR for giving us permission to access the site via the trail and finally Scott Nelson for donating the great lunch that he provided to the project. It was a great project for the club to take part in.

Prior to the project over the winter of 2012, we lost a long time LSSA Board Member, Gordy Davis, and we are naming this first volunteer planting project under the grant The Gordy Davis Memorial Forest. Watch it grow for decades to come.

Any future volunteer efforts in the watershed will posted in the newsletter as soon as the project is identified.



*Clockwise, lower left, opposite page: 1. Building protection cages; 2. Digging and planting; 3. Paul Sandstrom shows how its done; 4. The trees at Hammer Nursery; Transport by ATV; 6. Refreshments; 7. Trees in place. Photos 1,2,3 and 6 by Sequest Productions. Photos 4, 5, and 7 by Kevin J. Bovee*





## Lake Superior Steelhead Association

PO Box 16034  
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### LSSA's Mission:

For these reasons and more, the Lake Superior Steelhead Association exists: to protect our rivers and fish; to help preserve Lake Superior and its bounty; to learn more about the resources we enjoy and foster discussion, research and sound fisheries management practices; to educate anglers and the public about all these things. The LSSA has taken all these tasks upon its shoulders. These issues are too important to leave to chance or the vagaries of bureaucracies and politics. Our mission is to protect and improve the cold water fishery of the Lake Superior region and to bring various groups of anglers together in an atmosphere of friendship, so they can work for their and the resources' common good.

### Board of Directors:

President: Craig Wilson  
Vice President: Scott Kuiti  
Treasurer: Doug Dahl  
Secretary: Kevin J. Bovee  
Don Mitchell  
Gary Siverson\*  
Scott Thorpe  
John Whaley  
Curt Wistrom

Newsletter Editors: Maria Manion and Scott Thorpe

\*Past LSSA Presidents

## News and Notes

Compiled by Scott Thorpe

### LSOHC-LSSA Knife River Habitat Restoration Legacy Grant Project Update

By Scott Kuiti

The Knife River Habitat Restoration project hit full stride this past summer. In late May, 20 temperature probes were set in the West Branch and two West Branch tributaries (unofficially known as Udesen and DeBolt Creeks). In early July, the temp probes were checked. The data found water entering beaver dam area was significantly cooler than the water exiting. The probes will be pulled in October and data will be examined this winter.

Volunteer Tree Planting took place on June 1st with 18 volunteers donating a portion of their Saturday to plant trees at the site dubbed "Gordy Davis Memorial Forest" located off the Fox Farm Road and the State Snowmobile Trail. White Spruce, Tamarack and a few Green Ash trees were planted. Thank you to the volunteers and to Dunn Bros. Coffee for providing lunch.

Assessment work continues and is an on-going effort. One of the interesting findings is that when looking at a West Branch Tributary on Google Maps, it appears as if there are 6 beaver dams. Boots on the ground assessment found 28 beaver dams on the same stretch.

The 2nd Falls was fixed on September 4th. This project was approved by the LSOHC Council in June and was fast tracked to completion. The project immediately benefits anadromous trout running the Knife.

With the 2nd Falls project being accomplished and previous Black Ash Stands have been identified, the LSSA has completed two-thirds of the deliverables as outlined in the Legacy Grant Accomplishment Plan. This was accomplished in less than one year of grant work.

As we head into fall, assessment work

continues. Natural Resource Research Institute (NRRI), will be conducting a habitat assessment later in September to early October. Beaver dam assessment is taking place and sites for future tree plantings are being determined.

In June, the LSSA applied for another LSOHC Legacy Grant for Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Phase II. By early August, the LSOHC Council notified the LSSA that we had passed the first round and was invited to present at the LSOHC Hearing in September. On September 5th, the LSSA presented additional information to the LSOHC Council and answered questions.

### Letter From Lorne Allard of the North Shore Steelhead Association

Dear Steelhead News,

Thanks for the letter in the Steelhead News from Cedric Knuckey. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the LSSA on its 40th birthday. As you probably are aware, our club, the North Shore Steelhead Association, is also celebrating its 40th birthday. I am especially pleased to read Cedric's letter where he mentions that he has been a member of our club for over 36 years. I have had the opportunity to fish with Cedric and his close friend, Ray Dee, who is also a very close friend of mine.

Another great friend of your club, Larry Farmer, whom I have known for many years, has shown how successful you can be fishing with yarn. Larry's special yarn was white yarn with a tip of red in the centre. Needless to say, I have used this pattern for over 30 years. Prior to that, spawn was shown to us in the late 50's by my buddies and friend, Henry Ackervall, and his buddy, Jimmy Gerard, both graduates of Michigan Tech. We've had much fun when we converted from dew worms to the special spawn bait.

Steelhead fishing has been the most